

Coniston Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131698
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	341197
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Georgina Beasley

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lew Gray
Headteacher	Nigel Isaac
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons and 9 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, pupils and governors. Inspectors met informally with parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at teachers' planning, individual learning plans and important policies and procedures. Thirty parent questionnaires were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- attainment, learning and progress in writing
- the range of teaching strategies used to motivate learning and promote more consistency in pupils' progress
- how well provision in the Nursery and Reception prepares the children for future learning in Years 1 and 2.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. Nearly all pupils come from White British backgrounds. There is a very small Traveller community. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most needs include learning and speech and language difficulties. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. Children start in the Nursery when they are three and move to the Reception class in the September following their fourth birthday.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. The headteacher has a very clear and accurate picture of what is going well and what requires improvement. The vision for improvement is articulated clearly and has been embraced by most pupils and staff. The subsequent school improvement plan is sharply focused on the important priorities in need of improvement. Actions are adjusted regularly and measured against pupils' personal and academic achievements to ensure that the pupils' needs are met. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and, with consultant support, are driving through improvements effectively. As a result, attainment has improved this year and is broadly average in English and mathematics, reflecting satisfactory achievement. Although not all able pupils reach above average levels in writing and mathematics because of previous underachievement, most pupils make satisfactory progress from their below-average starting points.

Learning and progress in lessons are satisfactory. The school responds quickly when pupils' progress slows and attainment dips, and puts immediate interventions into place to support learning. As a consequence, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory due to steady improvement in pupils' attainment and achievement. Pupils are engaged most in those lessons where teachers share specific learning objectives with them so that they know what they are learning and why. Pupils know their targets, but don't always know how to reach them when the teachers' feedback and guidance are too general. In science and information and communication technology (ICT) lessons, pupils are fully engaged in investigations and problem-solving tasks that focus on developing key skills, knowledge and understanding and, as a result, pupils make good progress. In some English and mathematics lessons, pupils learn mostly by listening to the teacher. In these lessons, pupils quickly lose interest and their progress consequently slows.

Behaviour is satisfactory. Safeguarding requirements are met and pupils feel safe. Pupils make satisfactory contributions to the school community through their active school and class councils, and their work as classroom helpers. Positive partnerships with schools, pre-school services and local clubs and organisations enable pupils to make a satisfactory contribution to the local community. The curriculum promotes the pupils' satisfactory respect and awareness of the different global communities. Attendance has improved. Most pupils have good attendance and arrive in school on time. A small number of pupils are absent too often and this pulls down their attainment and progress. The pupils' sound personal qualities and their satisfactory literacy, numeracy and ICT skills prepare them sufficiently for the future.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build consistency in the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers:
 - organise learning more efficiently to ensure that pupils are fully engaged in their learning
 - ensure that learning objectives are shared with pupils and give them clear information about how to improve.
- Implement effective strategies for ensuring an immediate improvement in the attendance of the small number of pupils who are persistently absent.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment is broadly average and learning and progress are satisfactory. Girls still do not attain as highly as boys. Although improving, some more-able pupils, both boys and girls, are not reaching high enough levels in writing and mathematics due to historical underachievement. Progress is good in reading and science. Pupils enjoy their learning because they are involved in practical tasks that interest them and lessons are matched to their particular learning needs. Attainment in reading has improved significantly this year for Year 1 pupils who receive focused support from a reading recovery teacher outside the classroom. They read a broad range of books matched to their particular level. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities now make consistently satisfactory progress because of the additional, well-targeted support they receive in lessons from additional adults. Good progress has been made this year in Years 2, 5 and 6 because expectations are higher and learning is structured effectively to meet pupils specific needs. Pupils develop average levels of skill in using ICT.

Pupils make healthy choices at break and lunchtimes and enjoy keeping fit. They feel able to discuss any concerns with at least one adult or the headteacher and are confident that minor fall outs are sorted swiftly. Pupils are polite to adults and mostly to each other. Through the class suggestion boxes, pupils believe that their views are listened to and that they make a positive contribution to the school. They are proud of their fundraising efforts to support charities and to buy additional playground equipment. Pupils occasionally venture out into the local community, and they make some positive contributions to the wider world communities through charity fundraising events. Attendance is below average because a small number of pupils do not come to school regularly enough.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers are beginning to use a range of effective strategies to engage pupils actively in learning. At these times, pupils remain on task and listen attentively for much of the lesson and their response to teachers' questions is pertinent. Pupils enjoy answering questions that invite them to explain their ideas in English or the strategies they used to solve a problem in mathematics. Occasionally, pupils sit for too long listening to the teacher talk or following directions about how to complete a task.

More effective use of assessment information has raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and has helped to ensure extra adult support usually enables pupils who are struggling to catch up. Intervention strategies to improve the quality of learning have started to make a difference. More targeted support for pupils in lessons has resulted in more pupils reaching average levels this year across the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English in addition to another language have benefited particularly from this support. Assessment is not used so well during lessons to check whether pupils can already do the task and present extra challenge. At times, teachers do not always identify or share and review what pupils are meant to learn in lessons. Consequently, feedback does not always help pupils in checking and improving their work independently. As a result, pupils sometimes accept their first attempt whether it is correct in mathematics or of a high enough quality in writing.

The curriculum ensures that pupils develop their personal qualities and literacy, numeracy and ICT skills sufficiently to give them a secure foundation for later life. Pupils participate in a satisfactory range of clubs. They enjoy a varied range of visits to support

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their learning. Older pupils particularly enjoy and benefit from the residential trip each year. Satisfactory arrangements ensure the children enter and settle quickly into school life and, when the time comes, are confident about going to secondary school. Sound procedures are in place to ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for others who need personal guidance make satisfactory progress. The school's systems and partnerships have been successful in improving the attendance of most pupils. They are not yet effective in improving the attendance of the small number of pupils who are persistently absent.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, supported well by his acting deputy headteacher, has made a good start in driving up improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. The work of the senior leadership team is satisfactory. The school has made an accurate evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses. The governing body is better informed and so is enabled to do its job more effectively this year. Safeguarding procedures are effective in ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. Subject leaders monitor assessment data, teachers' planning and pupils' work to ensure agreed improvement strategies are working.

The school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunity to take part in the full range of activities. For example, the structure of class and school councils provides a means for every pupil to give their views and express their opinions about the school's work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language receive sound support, which gives them equal access to learning. A few more-able pupils do not always receive sufficient challenge to ensure they reach their potential in writing and mathematics. The school has a number of positive partnerships with Sure Start pre-school provision and with the receiving secondary school to sustain the well-being and learning for its youngest and oldest pupils. The school promotes community cohesion effectively. Increasingly, pupils are learning about the local and wider global communities through geography, art and music topics and by inviting visitors to talk about their work and display their talents.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

There is an enthusiasm in the Early Years Foundation Stage team because recent changes in the way learning is planned, implemented and organised is resulting in improved learning and progress for all children in Nursery and Reception. Attainment is higher this year in all areas of learning and shows that children are making satisfactory progress. Most children reach the expected levels for their age in their personal development and a few are exceeding these for the first time this year. Many are now reaching the expected levels in early reading, writing and number skills, although few are currently exceeding them.

Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. Adults plan a varied range of learning activities from which the children can choose, both in the classroom and in the outdoors, and that engages their curiosity and interest. As a result, the children ask questions about what is happening and talk confidently about their learning. Time is not always used efficiently during whole-class or small-group adult-led activities and so the children sometimes spend too long sitting and listening, for example during snack time and key worker group time or when talking as a class about their learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Changes to curriculum planning and teaching this year have resulted in good opportunities for the children to be more involved in their learning. As a result, the children are becoming inquisitive learners who enjoy solving problems. During the inspection, four boys worked tirelessly together to construct a series of pipes to direct water from the tap to the garden. Parents recognise that the changes made this year are bringing rapid improvement to the children's learning and as one parent commented, 'They are better prepared going from Nursery to Reception now.' This year the children are also better prepared for future learning in

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Year 1.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A small number of parents and carers returned questionnaires. The large majority of returns and the parents who spoke to inspectors were positive about the school. Parents feel their children are safe and that they enjoy school. Inspectors agree that children are safe in school. Pupils do enjoy school but they are not always engaged fully in lessons. There were very few negative responses. A small number of parents would like more information about their children's progress so that they know whether this is good enough and can help support their learning more effectively. The inspection found pupils' progress is satisfactory, but there is some inconsistency between subjects and classes because of weaknesses in teaching. Most parents and carers are happy with the school's leadership and, in particular, 'the new head who has made some positive changes'. Inspectors agree that changes have resulted in improvements in pupils' learning and attainment this year.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Coniston Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 217 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	50	13	43	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	14	47	13	43	1	3	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	8	27	18	60	3	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	33	15	50	3	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	40	14	47	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	33	17	57	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	27	20	67	2	7	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	5	17	20	67	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	27	20	67	2	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	33	12	40	1	3	2	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	43	13	43	2	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	33	16	53	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	43	14	47	2	7	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Coniston Primary School, Bristol BS34 5LN

Thank you for your welcome when I visited with two inspectors recently. Thank you especially to those who took the time to talk to us about what you like about the school and what you think can be better.

Coniston is a satisfactory school. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff are beginning to help you learn at a faster rate in lessons. Behaviour is satisfactory but as some of you said, 'Behaviour is good for most of the time, but sometimes people forget the rules.' You all feel safe and know an adult who you can turn to if you have a concern. Well done to those of you who choose healthy foods and try your best to be active at playtimes. The school council is a useful way that you can express your views about the school and to make a positive contribution to its work. Your headteacher is keen for you to do this even more.

You make satisfactory progress. However, some of you can do better, especially the girls but also some boys too. I have asked the school to do three things to help improve your learning. I have asked your headteacher to make sure that:

- teachers engage you more effectively in lessons and help you learn at a faster rate
- teachers share with you what you will learn in every lesson and that they give you helpful feedback and guidance so you can improve your work independently
- there is an immediate improvement in the attendance of the small number of pupils who are absent from school too often.

You can help by asking your teachers to explain more clearly in lessons what you are learning and why, what you need to do to make your work better, and for harder work when you find the work too easy. Well done to those of you who come to school every day. Those of you who do not will need to try a bit harder if the school is to achieve its attendance targets.

Thank you again for your contribution to the inspection

Yours sincerely

Georgina Beasley

Lead inspector

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